

Prepare, Motivate the Workforce

Strategic Goal #6

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“All thrust and no vector” is often used to describe some members of the military. The phrase implies that a person has a lot of motivation, but no direction on where to apply it. This idea is central to the U.S. Air Force Academy’s sixth strategic goal — prepare and motivate the workforce.

The goal targets developing and implementing a force development program to attract, develop, retain and support Academy personnel.

“Having a motivated workforce is very important to accomplishing our mission,” said Col. Jimmy McMillian, 10th Air Base Wing commander. “But that is only part of the equation. We need to ensure they have the opportunities to continue to learn the skills they need to do their jobs well. This includes professional development, educational opportunities and networking with peers to stay at the top of their game.”

Across the Air Force and the Academy, professional development is a uniform theme, encompassing cadets, active duty, Reservists, National Guard, civilians and contractors alike.

Military members have professional military education such as the Airmen Leadership School, Squadron Officer School, skill-level upgrades, and specialty courses based on a member’s Air Force Specialty Code. For Academy Military Trainers and Air Officers Commanding, there are specific courses as well.

“AMTs receive seven weeks of training — about 300 hours,” said Brig. Gen. Susan Desjardins, former commandant of cadets. “The class covers training as a Military Training Instructor, the Principles of Instructor course and the First Sergeant course.”

“The AOC master’s program takes leaders through a one-year exploration of personal understanding and

development in order to transform not only their capabilities as leaders and coaches to cadets as individuals, but to enhance organizational effectiveness,” she continued. “Through our formal education, practical experiences and personal assessment strategy, we challenge the future AOCs’ mental models through reflection, self-exploration, various theoretical perspectives, and experiences to create dissonance. Thus, we hope to shock them into new understandings and a reexamination of the world as they see it. This enables them to become more self-aware and develops them as transformational leaders.”

In addition, job opportunities help motivate the workforce and train personnel.

“Creating opportunities for promotion and advancement, such as senior master sergeant superintendent positions and staff positions for both officers and enlisted, helps motivate people,” said General Desjardins. “In addition, training opportunities, public recognition, time-off rewards, and time for physical fitness also help.”

For civilians, there are numerous programs as well.

“Training in the Air Force is an integral and critical part of the overall human resource management function. Civilian personnel provides many classes to appropriated funded civilians,” said Tim Neuman, chief, workforce plans and programs. “Some of the classes include all of the Microsoft Office and Microsoft Operating System training classes held at New Horizons Computer Learning Centers. We also offer an array of management courses on base. Classes like Coaching and Team Building, Creative Leadership, Mentoring Skills for Leaders, and Excelling as a Supervisor.”

Civilian personnel can register at the civilian personnel office and find a complete list of course offerings at <https://>



Photo by Rachel Boettcher
Cadets use a combined effort to overcome a all challenge at the Ropes Course during R&R Oct. 10. The Ropes Course, run by the Center for Character Development, is a place where base organizations can develop teamwork and unit cohesion in a fun and motivating environment.

afkm.wpafb.af.mil/ASPs/CoP/OpenCoP.asp. Formal training is managed by the individual career fields at the Air Force Personnel Center and can be found at [https://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/Site Maps/CivilianCareerDev.asp](https://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/Site%20Maps/CivilianCareerDev.asp).

All in all, the motivation here is the mission and the cadets.

“I think the best motivator is the opportunity to work with cadets,” said Dean of the Faculty Brig. Gen.

Dana Born. “Cadets are so motivated and so eager to learn that it is just a privilege to see them grow into officers.”

General Desjardins shared similar thoughts.

“Overall, our work force is very intrinsically motivated,” she said. “They want to coach and mentor the cadets and see them develop into leaders of character. Our biggest reward is graduation ... seeing all of your hard work pay off by commissioning 1,000 of your cadets makes everything worth it.”